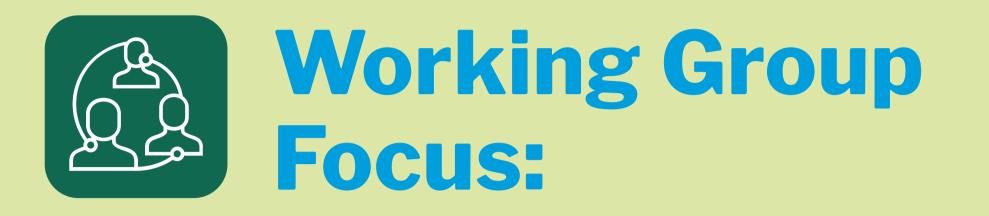




Food Systems Seeds: Seeding equity in African Food Systems



- Investigating the role of marginal, experimental, or bottom-up initiatives in fostering equity within African food systems.
- Using a food systems lens to enhance different dimensions of equity: procedural, recognitional, and distributional.

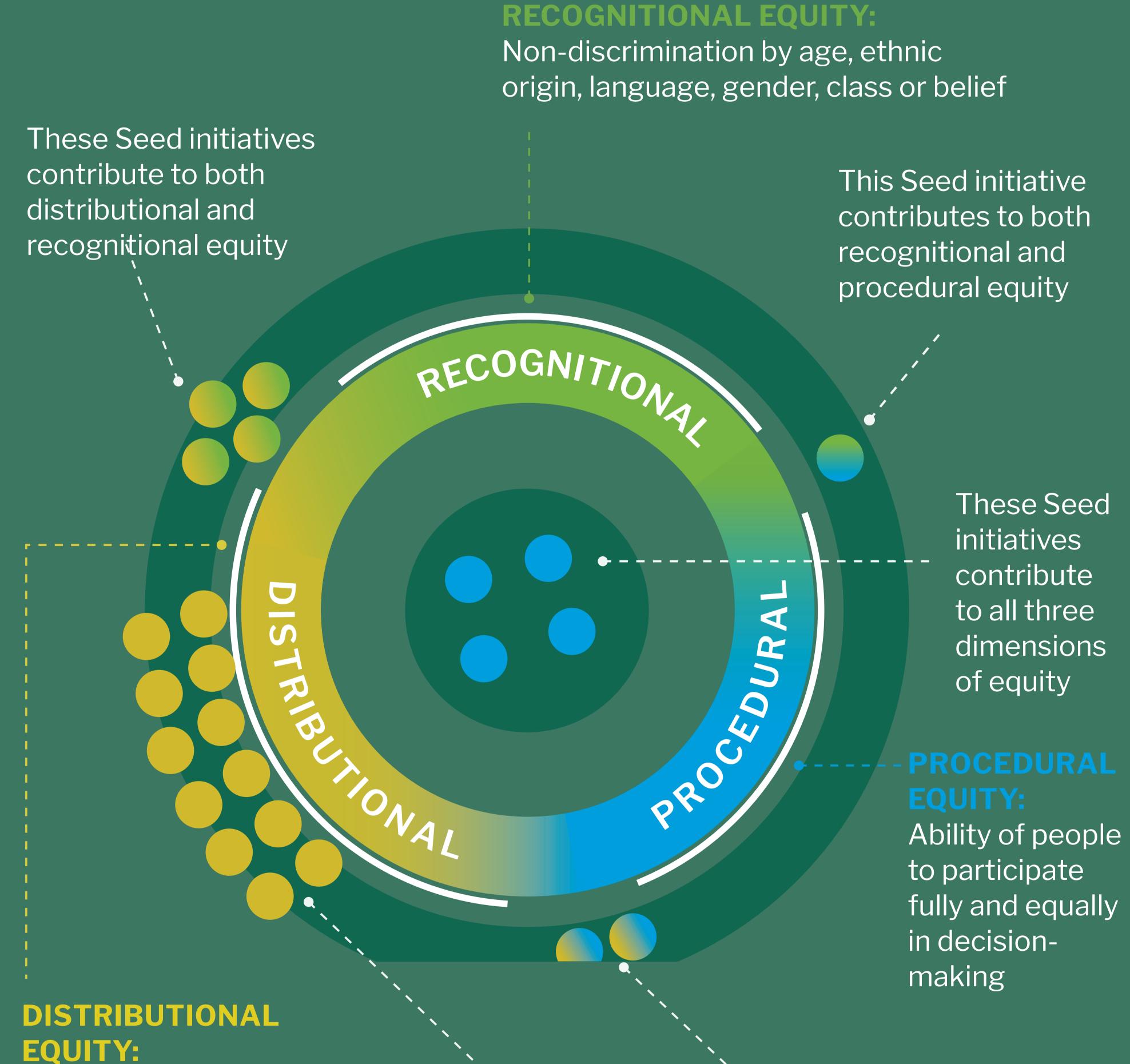
Through collaborative research and stakeholder dialogue, they identified barriers and strategies for these initiatives and provided practical recommendations for funders and practitioners. Their work emphasized the importance of building social capital, creating enabling environments, and supporting collaborative efforts to achieve greater equity and sustainability in African food systems. The engagement of diverse funders and the ongoing dialogue highlight the potential for scaling up transformative impacts and driving meaningful change in the food systems landscape.



Engagement Process:

- **Collaborative Research:** Identified and studied 24 seedinitiatives from South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, Benin, and Zambia that showed potential positive impacts on equity and food systems.
- **Stakeholder Dialogue:** Held an online session in October 2023 with researchers and development funders, including the International Development Research Centre, USAID, Wellcome Trust, and FCDO, to discuss how to better support transformative initiatives.
- Community Engagement: Focused on building social capital within communities to foster engagement with policy initiatives and ensure successful integration of transformative seeds.
- **Strategic Dissemination:** Shared findings through practice briefs, guidance notes, and blogs to provide practical insights and recommendations for funders and practitioners.
- **Funder Engagement:** Facilitated a collaborative dialogue between development organizations and funding partners to align funder realities with the needs of small-scale transformative initiatives, emphasizing the importance of enabling policy environments and fostering strong social connections within communities.

Equity contribution of the assessed Seed initiatives





Key Insights:

- **Role of Seed Initiatives:** Marginal, experimental, and bottom-up initiatives play a critical role in fostering equity in food systems by addressing procedural, recognitional, and distributional dimensions.
 - **Beneficial Outcomes and** Support Needs: Seed initiatives show numerous benefits to both the food system and equity among beneficiaries. However, they need more support to become deeply transformational in areas such as improved participation in decisionmaking, greater involvement in policy and institutions, legal recognition, and land ownership for beneficiaries, and increased recognition of the elderly and disabled in the food system.
- **Barriers to Impact:** Key barriers include financial constraints, lack of enabling conditions, misaligned funding, socio-cultural dynamics, and

Fair distribution of both benefits and harms, in terms of goods, services and opportunities

These Seed initiatives contribute to distributional equity

These Seed initiatives contribute to both distributional and procedural equity



Guidance Note: Supporting transformation to a more sustainable and equitable future: insights from seeds of change in African food systems. A guidance note for research and development funders.

Advancing equity through food systems transformations blog. **Available here:**





Supporting transformations to a more sustainable and equitable future: Insights from seeds of change in African food systems

A GUIDANCE NOTE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDERS

This brief offers insights into how innovative, marginal initiatives – so-called "Seeds" – can contribute towards transformation to a more sustainable and equitable world.

Insights are gathered from interviews with key actors from a variety of Seed initiatives in African food systems, focusing on how these initiatives contribute to advancing equity and sustainability, the barriers they face in achieving impact, and how these initiatives may be better supported. The goal of this brief is to identify principles that can support the evaluation and support of potentially transformative initiatives, and guide future programmatic choices

Key insights and recommendations presented here are from a collaborative project that emerged in response to a call by The Southern African Resilience Academy, funded by the Global Resilience Partnership, seeking syntheses on the topic of equitable resilience from a Global South perspective. This synthesis builds on an ongoing IDRC-funded project on fostering food system transformation in Africa.



poor infrastructure. Infrastructure limits stability, increases costs, hinders scaling up impact, and reduces resource efficiency.

Context-Specific Funding:

Responsive funding tailored to specific contexts is critical for overcoming barriers. While financial and technical support is needed, seed initiatives also recognize their own agency and may not always require individual funding support.

Collaboration as a Strategy:

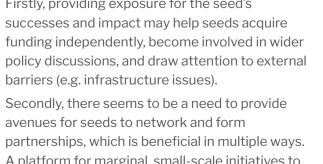
Collaboration is vital for overcoming barriers, forming new seed initiatives, and facilitating exposure of successes. Partnerships and networking are crucial for emergence, scaling, and overcoming challenges. Supporting the formulation of project ideas and implementation plans is essential for the growth of seed initiatives.

Development partners have a significant role, beyond direct financial support, to enhance the

Areas for action

funding independently, become involved in wider policy discussions, and draw attention to external barriers (e.g. infrastructure issues) Secondly, there seems to be a need to provide avenues for seeds to network and form partnerships, which is beneficial in multiple ways.

sector



transformational impact of seed initiatives. A key role is amplifying platforms and networks, and curating connections across different scales of initiatives: Firstly, providing exposure for the seed's

A platform for marginal, small-scale initiatives to learn from each other, interact with various actors (e.g. government officials, health professionals, chefs) and leverage this knowledge from other areas or sectors to create partnerships and form new innovations, would be a powerful mechanism for creating more systemic change across the